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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #70

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EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WEEK.....Secretary Bergland has designated the week of October 17-21, as Equal Employment Opportunity Week in USDA.

The Office of Personnel will sponsor assemblies with prominent U.S. Representatives such as Parren J. Mitchell, Henry B. Gonzalez, Shirley Chisholm, and Gladys N. Spellman; workshops on topics of interest to all employees; speakers; and films. Several minority and women's organizations, as well as colleges and universities, will set up exhibits in the Patio. The opening session will feature an address by Secretary Bergland, a keynote speech by Congressman Mitchell, and a panel discussion entitled "The New Administration and EEO" with all of the Assistant Secretaries or their representatives.

The primary purpose of EEO week is to promote an awareness of EEO within USDA and to allow top management officials to voice their commitment to EEO. Administrators are urged to publicize EEO week within their Agencies. (Contact: Gloria F. Torres, OP, ext. 72973)

FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION CHANGES.....GSA has announced changes to the Federal Travel Regulations effective for travel performed on or after September 18.

The pertinent changes are as follows:

...High Rate Geographical Areas - Actual expenses are automatically authorized in 14 new areas:

Albany, N.Y.	\$39	Houston, Tex.	\$41
Baltimore, Md.	\$41	Las Vegas, Nev.	\$48
Bridgeport, Conn.	\$40	Miami, Fla.	\$43
Charleston, W. Va.	\$39	Milwaukee, Wisc.	\$39
Dallas, Tex.	\$39	Minneapolis, Minn.	\$41
Detroit, Mich.	\$42	New Orleans, La.	\$44
Hartford, Conn.	\$39	Providence, R.I.	\$40

Eight areas have previously been identified for high rates:

Boston, Mass.	\$49	New York, N.Y.	\$50
Chicago, Ill.	\$45 <u>a/</u>	Philadelphia, Pa.	\$46
Los Angeles, Calif	\$40	San Francisco, Calif	\$45 <u>a/</u>
Newark, N.J.	\$45 <u>a/</u>	Washington, D.C.	\$50

a/ Amounts increased

...Mileage Allowance - When advantageous to the government, the mileage allowance for use of privately-owned vehicles is 17 cents.

There is no change in per diem for domestic travel. The rate is still average lodging cost plus \$16, not to exceed \$35 per day. (Contact: Howard Globerman, OF, ext. 77251)

CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT.....Secretary Bergland has endorsed the President's July 20 memorandum to the heads of Executive departments and agencies calling for firm leadership to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin in Federal programs. USDA regulations implementing Title VI are contained in 7 C.F.R. 15. The Secretary's civil rights policy statement, issued September 13, states "I am committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color; sex, religion or national origin in the programs of the Department of Agriculture". Four guidelines for civil rights in USDA programs have been established:

1. Civil Rights laws, policies and regulations will be applied fairly, vigorously and expeditiously.
2. Each administrator, office director, program manager and line supervisor will be held accountable for demonstrating personal leadership in civil rights.
3. Sufficient resources will be committed to implementing the law.
4. Agencies and offices will establish and incorporate civil rights into their overall planning and evaluation operations.

(Contact: James Frazier, OEO, ext. 74256)

MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.....In a statement of September 12, the President reaffirmed the Administration's policy to promote the development of minority business enterprise. He said that "The experiences of the past decade show that the government cannot solve all the problems in this area, but the government at all levels has an important leadership role. This Administration will actively support minority business development, and we will strongly encourage the private sector to increase its involvement in this area."

The Interagency Council for Minority Business Enterprise will have responsibility for promoting, coordinating and monitoring federal programs relating to minority business enterprise. The Council is chaired by the Under Secretary of Commerce. The USDA representative to the Council is Deputy Secretary John White.

All Executive departments have been instructed to work with the Office of Minority Business Enterprise and the Small Business Administration to devise effective minority business assistance programs. In addition, Executive departments have also been instructed to double their purchases of services from minority firms through direct and indirect procurement activities during the next two fiscal years and report to the President on the progress in meeting this goal. (Contact: James Frazier, OEO, ext. 74256)

OI INVESTIGATIVE TRAINING.....The first of three two-week supplementary training courses was held from September 12-23 for newly-hired agents who have completed basic investigative training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. This supplemental course was designed to provide special instruction in USDA programs, investigation procedures and report writing. Nine USDA agencies participated in the instructions by providing speakers to discuss agency missions and program regulations. The success of the program can be attributed, to a considerable extent, to the cooperation and assistance provided by these agencies. (Contact: L. L. Free, OI, ext. 76915)

PARKING RULES AND REGULATIONS.....During the past several months, OI has been actively investigating complaints regarding abuse of the parking system. Based on those findings, the following changes in the parking rules and regulations have been initiated:

1. The person whose name appears first on the application is responsible for keeping the appropriate agency parking representative informed of all changes in the carpool membership.
2. Original signatures are required on all applications.
3. Compact spaces cannot be used for full sized vehicles under any circumstances.

In addition, there will be at least one space in each agency's assignment that will be subject to 24 hour recall. This will give both OO and the agency parking representative some flexibility to meet emergency parking requirements that arise from time to time.

The current parking assignments expire on November 6. At a meeting held with agency parking representatives on September 16, there was general agreement that the changes will be helpful in the administration of the parking program. (Contact: Al Cauley, OO, ext. 72815)

USDA METRICATION PROGRAM.....A meeting of agency metric coordinators and metric information representatives was held September 13, to kick off the USDA metrication effort. Guest speakers were Dr. Malcolm O'Hagen, President of the American National Metric Council, and Eldon Nowstrup, Chairman of the Interagency Metrication Subcommittee.

USDA metrication regulations, based on governmentwide guidelines, are being issued and will provide for an orderly process of conversion to the metric system over a five year period.

Howard Hjort, Director, Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget will represent the Department on the Metric Policy Committee recently established to facilitate metrication coordination between Federal agencies. (Contact: Robert Owen, FAS, ext. 75531)

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM ON SEX DISCRIMINATION.....On August 26, President Carter sent a memorandum to the heads of all Executive departments and agencies calling for cooperation in eliminating sex discrimination from the laws and policies of the United States. The Department of Justice has established a Task Force in its Civil Rights Division to coordinate Federal action. The President's memorandum requests all agencies to (1) initiate a comprehensive review of all programs to identify any regulations, guidelines, programs or policies which result in unequal treatment based on sex and (2) develop proposals to change any laws, regulations and policies which discriminate on the basis of sex. The Office of Equal Opportunity will coordinate the Department's review. (Contact: James Frazier, OEO, ext. 74256)

LEGISLATION.....

...Farm Bill - The House agreed to the conference report on S. 275, Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, on September 16. This clears the measure for the White House. The President has until October 3 to make a decision.

...Rural Housing - The conference report on H. R. 6655, Housing and Community Development, was filed in the House on September 26. Both Houses must clear the bill in time for Presidential approval by September 30, the day the current Federal housing program authorizations expire. Title V of the measure embodies USDA's rural housing programs.

(Contact: Al Duran, OBPE, ext. 74654)

FY 1978 AND 1979 COST DISTRIBUTIONS.....The agency distribution of FY 1978 and 1979 costs related to the Working Capital Fund and the Consolidated Working Fund are included in a package prepared by the Operations Division, OF. Copies of this package were distributed at the September 29 Management Council meeting and have been sent to all agency budget officers. These cost estimates form the basis for advance billings and expense prorations. (Contact: John Cary, OF, ext. 75631)

ARS PERSONNEL ACTIONS STATUS SYSTEM (PASS).....PASS is now operational in the Northeastern Regional Personnel Office at Beltsville and, while yet in its early "shake down" stages, the system is using live data and is providing management reports on the status of personnel actions. A presentation regarding this system is being planned for the November Management Council Conference. (Contact: Gail F. Sedgwick, ARS, ext. 73801)

JOB CORPS CENTERS.....The Department of Labor is examining the feasibility of establishing additional Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers in New England, New York, New Jersey and California.

The Forest Service is prepared to participate in the planned expansion of these Centers as part of a continuing effort to provide services to the unemployed, underemployed, minorities, and other disadvantaged persons.

Additional Forest Service Job Corps Centers involving the rehabilitation of existing facilities and/or new construction depend on the approval of an interagency agreement patterned after the Young Adult Conservation Corps and the Senior Community Service Employment program agreements. (Contact: T. R. Delaney, FS, ext. 78432)

SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS.....The Forest Service and the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) are cooperating in three solar energy demonstration projects that will provide the Forest Service with savings in energy costs, and information useful to the national effort to conserve supplies of fossil fuels. As follow-up to a recent agreement between ERDA and the Forest Service, ERDA will contribute 80% - \$127,600- of the costs to install solar energy systems in three buildings planned for Forest Service use: a new office building in the Gila National Forest, an office building addition in the Modoc National Forest, and a new Forestry Sciences Lab at California State University, Fresno, (Contact: Al Colley, FS, 235-8077)